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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 003140

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: EU/TURKEY: DUTCH COMMENT ON DECISION DRAFT

Classified By: DCM Daniel Russel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: On November 29 the Dutch circulated draft conclusions on Turkey to EU partners (subsequently leaked to the press) in advance of the December 17 Council meeting that includes strong, but predictable, language on accession (e-mailed to EUR/ERA and USEU). Turkish officials in The Hague have indicated, both to the Dutch and to us, that they will likely accept the Council language as long as it contains a clear "yes" and a date for starting negotiations. The Dutch are watchful for any indication that negotiations on the date for Turkey could be used by Member States to get what they want on the other candidate countries, Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria. End Summary.

DUTCH STRATEGY FOR GETTING TO "YES" ON TURKEY IS ON TRACK

2. (C) Engineering a "yes" on December 17 was the essential act of the Dutch Presidency, Pieter de Gooijer (MFA, Director European Integration) told DCM on the evening of November 30. It was too early to relax, but that thus far the Turkish accession process was going exactly as he had hoped. The Dutch circulated draft Council conclusions on November 29, after resolving a GONL internal dispute over whether to keep the draft secret. They concluded that a last minute attempt by Heads of State to deal with previously unseen texts could precipitate a disaster worse than the negative reactions an early release might provoke. De Gooijer said that he had just spent four hours November 29 with EU DirGen Marnix Krop, PM Balkenende Advisor Rob Swartbol, and visiting Volkan Boskir (Turkish Deputy U/S for European Affairs) reviewing in detail the Presidency's draft Council conclusions on Turkey. The Turks pushed back on multiple points but de Gooijer was finally left with the impression that they seemed prepared to live with all the conditions and caveats as long as they got a clean "yes" with a date. Ambassador Ildem separately told the DCM the same evening that there was a lot that Turkey had not liked in the draft - particularly on Cyprus. After a lengthy discussion of the Ankara Protocol, Ildem finally clarified that he felt Turkey would move on Cyprus (presumably by agreeing to the protocol) "at 1:00 a.m. on the morning of December 18th after we are sure of what we are getting." He admitted that their other complaints about the text as it now stands "were not deal breakers."

3. (C) De Gooijer categorically rejected the Turkish public claim that the circulated draft conclusions were just a "first stab" that bore little or no resemblance to what would ultimately come out of the Council meeting. The Dutch hope no one will reopen the unbracketed parts of the draft, since they felt it could come entirely unraveled. De Gooijer noted that the Heads of State and Government alone can resolve the bracketed portions on December 17, which contain four open decisions: the "yes," the date to start negotiation, the "process" (he did not elaborate), and the clarification that the goal of negotiations was full membership. He said he had "a paragraph on each in his back pocket," but it remained for the Heads to work on them.

4. (C) Finally, de Gooijer reported that a lower-level meeting among EU mission reps in Brussels on November 30 had gone quite smoothly and augured well for the COREPER meeting December 1. (There was only one more COREPER and the December 13 GAERC before the Council, he noted.) The main issues raised had to do with (a) whether to pair or delink the Bulgarian and Romanian candidacies (the French wanted to pair, he revealed), and (b) whether to give Croatia a date (as the Germans want) or make negotiations conditional on surrendering General Gotovina to the ICTY (as the UK wants) (reported septel).

EFFECT ON THE TURKEY ISSUE OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR OTHER
CANDIDATE COUNTRIES HARD TO PREDICT

5. (C) Jochem Wiers (MFA European Integration Department and principal drafter on Turkey) told Poloff November 30 that the Dutch are beginning to "discern the outlines" of a negotiation strategy in which dates for Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia are packaged in complex quid pro quo deal making in the late hours of December 17 (septel). While he did not include Turkey in the calculation, he pointed out that in the end, the importance of the Turkey consensus would necessarily

affect and be affected by discussions of the other three. Wiers revealed no knowledge of any deal brewing in Brussels involving Turkey and Cyprus, but he said it would help the Dutch now if Turkey could find a way to positively acknowledge Cyprus before December 17. He pointed to Turkey's handling of Cyprus recognition issues at the signing of the Rome Treaty of Constitution as a model for December 17. Confirming what Ildem and de Gooijer had told the DCM, Wiers said the Dutch sense a readiness to be flexible at "high levels" in the Turkish government, but only "in extremis."

16. (C) Looking ahead to the Dutch delegation to the closed Council negotiations, Wiers expects it will include PM Balkenende, joined by advisors Webke Kingma or Rob Swarthol, plus a note taker (three is the maximum for any Member State). Pieter de Gooijer and a small number of other senior staff will be in a side room nearby.
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